

Issue 13 | February 2007

# HGZine

Free Magazine For Handheld Gamers. Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...

## EXCLUSIVE PLAYTEST! ASSASSIN'S CREED ALTAIR'S CHRONICLES

We've played it and it's looking stunning!  
(And if you like this cover, hover  
your mouse over here to see it in full!)

PLUS  
27 DS AND  
PSP GAMES  
INSIDE!

HARDCORE UPROAR  
Crisis Core Final  
Fantasy VII  
Exclusive preview inside

SHAZAM!  
Making Magic  
The most original DS title ever?



## FULL REVIEWS!



DS

**Mario & Sonic  
at the Olympics**  
Going for gold



DS

**Advance Wars:  
Days of Ruin**  
The battle continues on DS



PSP

**Final Fantasy I**  
The classic RPG comes to PSP!



PLUS!  
News and reviews of  
the latest mobile games



# Welcome to HGZine



We've heard rumours of a DS version of *Assassin's Creed* for some time now, but it was only on the 15th of January that Ubisoft officially announced that *Assassin's Creed Altair's Chronicles* was bound for the DS – and sooner than we could have hoped, too.

Naturally, we were straight on the phone to Ubisoft and the results of that conversation are here for you to see, as we've got the shots, the interview and the first playtest for you.

Those with different tastes will still find plenty to entertain you though, as we've also had a closer look at the new *Final Fantasy VII* game and the usual bumper crop of reviews, previews for your DS, PSP or mobile phone.

Enjoy the issue and, as always, keep writing in to share your gaming thoughts with us.

Dean Mortlock, Editor  
HGZine@gamerzines.com

## MEET THE TEAM

They play games for a living, drive around in fancy sports cars and live in castles made of gold – they are... the writers.

- Kath Brice**  
This month we gave Kath Jackass to review and we're still apologising. Sorry, Kath.  
PLAYING THIS MONTH: Jackass the Game
- Dave Perrett**  
Dave's been playing *The Fast and the Furious*. And yes, he is both fast and furious.  
PLAYING THIS MONTH: *The Fast and the Furious*
- Chris Schilling**  
This man has played four (FOUR!) *Final Fantasy* games this month. Envy him.  
PLAYING THIS MONTH: Lots of *Final Fantasy*
- Mark Ramshaw**  
It's all Gauls and zombies for Mark this issue. Which kinda suits him.  
PLAYING THIS MONTH: *Asterix at the Olympics*
- Damien McFerran**  
Looking for a game for your mobile phone? This is the man to ask.  
PLAYING THIS MONTH: *Devil May Cry* (mobile)

DON'T MISS!  
This month's highlights

DS

ASSASSIN'S CREED  
ALTAIR'S CHRONICLES

The best-selling next generation game of last year is now DS bound. Find out all about it in our exclusive feature

PSP

CRISIS CORE:  
FINAL FANTASY VII

The classic role-playing game gets an update and a polish and is heading to the PSP

PSP

FlatOut: Head On

Could this be a surprise hit on the PSP? Very possibly

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away!

<b>SONY PSP</b> FlatOut: Head On Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII The Fast and the Furious Harvey Birdman: Attorney at Law Final Fantasy I Final Fantasy II PSP News Roundup	<b>NINTENDO DS</b> Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates Making Magic Assassin's Creed Altair's Chronicles Asterix at the Olympic Games Teenage Zombies: Invasion of the Alien Brain	Thingsy! Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games Advance Wars: Days of Ruin DS News Roundup <b>MOBILE PHONE</b> News Reviews
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# GEOMETRY WARS™ GALAXIES

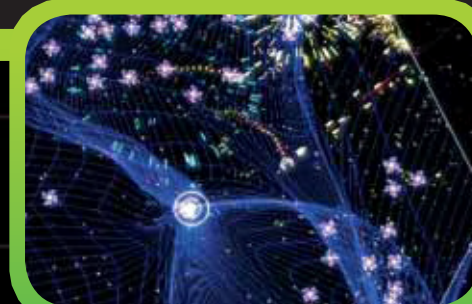
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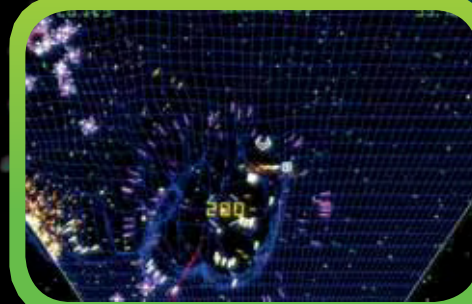
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CONTROL →





**Publisher:** Empire Interactive  
**Developer:** Bugbear Entertainment  
**Heritage:** FlatOut, Sega Rally (PSP)  
**Link:** www.empireinteractive.com  
**ETA:** 14th March

**PREVIEW FEEDBACK!**  
 Click here to tell us what you think of FlatOut: Head On



With everything that's going on, you'd assume the framerate would come to a juddering halt, but it all runs remarkably smoothly



It's not just about controlling your car – fling your driver through the windscreen and grab some serious air for big points

**"Thanks to the amazing physics, your driver's pain is wince-inducingly realistic"**



The particle effects, like this flying glass, are seriously impressive in motion

# FlatOut: Head On

Better to burnout than fade away

**LATEST NEWS**

## What's the story?

The FlatOut series has always been unfairly labelled 'the poor man's Burnout', but its most recent incarnation on the Xbox 360, FlatOut: Ultimate Carnage, caused many critics to eat their words. Head On is essentially a portable retread, which really looks to be pushing the PSP to its limits...

## What do we know?

This is one for the graphics whores out there. With Sony kindly unlocking the full processor speed of PSP, Head On not only maintains the level of destructive mayhem of the original, but moves so smoothly and quickly that you'd swear you were playing on some kind of handheld super-machine.

Its crashtastic racing is blended beautifully with laugh-out-loud stunts – which see your driver hurled into the air and through rings of fire, before getting a face full of pavement. Thanks to the amazing physics, your driver's pain is wince-inducingly realistic. It's gloriously silly stuff too, and we can't wait to play more of it.

## When do we get more?

And we'll get more in around a month's time. March 14th is the date to put in your diaries.

## Anything else to declare?

There's a new mode to add to the destruction derby arenas, based on a traditional 'deathmatch' format, with a host of power-ups to help total the opposition. Smokin'!



RULE THE OCEANS.  
SEIZE THE LAND.  
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22/01/08

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CONTROL →





**Publisher:** Square-Enix  
**Developer:** Square-Enix  
**Heritage:** Children of Mana, Dragon Quest Monsters: Joker  
**Link:** [www.square-enix.co.jp/ffcc](http://www.square-enix.co.jp/ffcc)  
**ETA:** 21st March

**PREVIEW FEEDBACK!**  
Click here to tell us what you think of Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles



Boss battles in the GameCube original were often tedious wars of attrition – the difficulty has been tweaked slightly here, though they're still tough customers



# Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates

LATEST NEWS

*You'll get by with a little help from your friends*

## What's the story?

The original concept for *Crystal Chronicles* was a newcomer-friendly multiplayer *Final Fantasy* experience. Trouble was, the GameCube original required a lot of hassle, expense and time to play 'properly', while the single-player was nowhere near as entertaining. On DS, the action-packed dungeon crawl for four makes a whole lot more sense, while the solo story mode has been fleshed out.

## What do we know?

It looks gorgeous, for starters – if anyone other than Nintendo knows how to squeeze the most out of the DS, it's Square-Enix. With some beautiful story sequences supplementing the action, the presentation is remarkable. The game itself is an action-based RPG, where four races (Selkie, Yuke, Lilty and Clavat) combine their powers to get through increasingly tough dungeons populated by monsters and a huge boss at the end. There are competitive elements throughout, with missions seeing players battle for the most loot.

## When do we get more?

It's due out on the 21st March over here in Europe, and we should have a review for you next month.

## Anything else to declare?

It's possible to carry a rival on your head to prevent them from getting the best power-ups – though your pal can tap a key rapidly to stomp on your head and escape. It leads to some very funny moments in multiplayer games.



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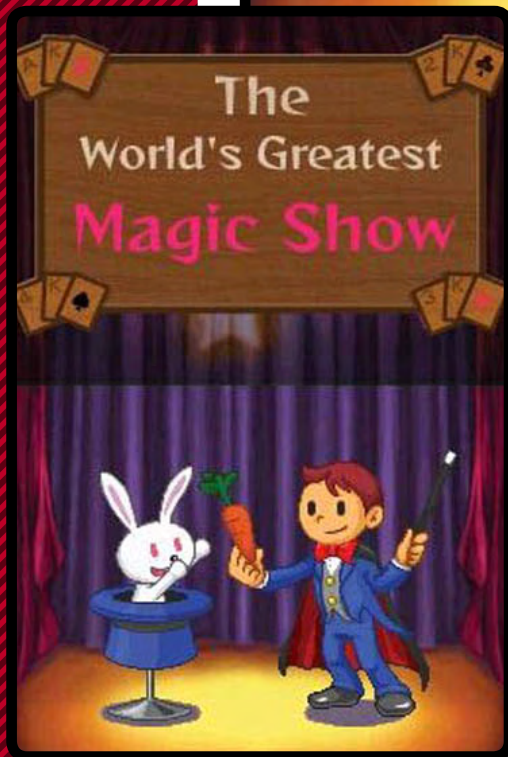
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If only girls in real life were that easily impressed. *Making Magic* is fun, but it won't help your chances with the ladies



This creepy moving hand will reach for whatever your 'audience member' is thinking of. Now that *is* magic

Wealth Love Dream



Mystic Hand



The presentation isn't particularly showy, but it makes learning and performing the tricks clear to understand

# Making Magic

LATEST  
NEWS

You'll like this – not a lot – but you'll like it

## What's the story?

This is another non-game from Nintendo that's designed to appeal outside the traditional gamer demographic. But before all you *Brain Training* haters run to the hills, just wait a minute – this one's actually pretty entertaining fare and certainly far from Kawashima's cerebral challenges.

**"The DS teaches you how to pull off some pretty effective sleights of hand"**

## What do we know?

The US version – which we've been playing – comes with a pack of cards, which are used as a prop for a great many tricks. The DS teaches you how to pull off some pretty effective sleights of hand, though most of the tasks require some kind of stylus or mic-based interaction with the console itself, rather than just following instructions. Some of it is seriously clever stuff –

one or two tricks we tried out on willing guinea pigs were met with genuine shock. How to get your console to only recognise your own claps? Ah, now that would be telling, and we don't reveal trade secrets...

## When do we get more?

14th March is the date Nintendo UK gets kicked out of the Magic Circle, so it's fair to say the we might well have a review for you in the next issue of HGZine.

## Anything else to declare?

The game was titled *Master of Illusion* in the US, and *Magic Taisen* in Japan. By the time you read this, the title will have probably changed again – we've heard a rumour it might become *Magic Made Fun*.



PSP

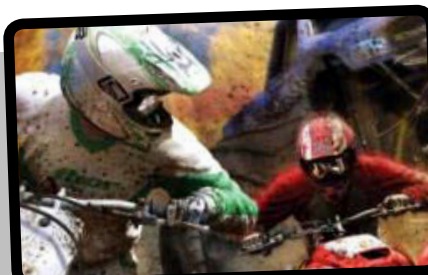
# Incoming

Coming soon to your handheld

## MX vs ATV Untamed

Publisher: THQ | Release date: March 2008

It doesn't take a genius to know that riding a fast motorbike through stinking mud and over big hills is rather good fun. Boasting all manner of off-road vehicular transport and the ability to perform some quite frankly 'radical' stunts, *MX vs ATV Untamed* intends to bring this outrageous outdoor pursuit to the small screen of your PSP. We have our fingers firmly crossed that the game is as fun as it sounds.



## Dragoneer's Aria

Publisher: Koei | Release date: February 2008

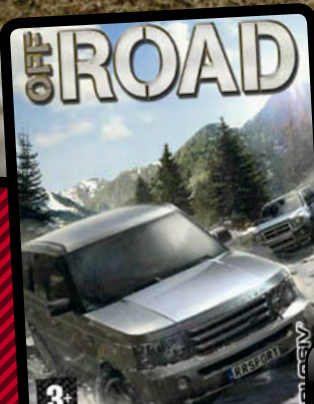
Coming from the same developer as the rather underwhelming *Blade Dancer*, this turn-based RPG is shaping up to be something very special indeed. Sumptuous artwork coupled with high production values and a wonderful soundtrack should equal a near-essential purchase – but as always we're reserving judgement until we've had chance to really get acquainted with this impressively epic quest. The PSP is hardly overflowing with quality role-playing games at the moment, so this could be just what we're looking for.



## Off Road

Publisher: Xplosiv | Release date: March 2008

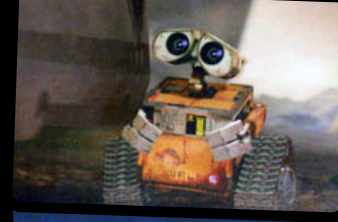
Alongside *MX vs ATV Untamed*, Xplosiv's *Off Road* is also focused on the art of driving fast machines on less than ideal road conditions. However, with this game the vehicles are a little more substantial, with the legendary Land Rover making a rare videogame appearance. Driving expensive 4x4 SUVs at fast speeds might be something you dream about when you're stuck in rush-hour traffic in your unimpressive European compact, but will it be entertaining enough in digital form to warrant a purchase? Time will tell...



## WALL·E

Publisher: THQ | Release date: July 2008

Pixar's latest cinematic masterpiece is still a few months off yet but even so we're still getting pretty excited. Poor little WALL·E is the last robot on Earth, left to clean up the terrible mess the human race has left. He promptly falls in love with probe droid EVE, and this year's most unlikely love story is born. Details on the PSP version are scarce at present but THQ has confirmed that you will have the opportunity to play as both WALL·E and EVE while traversing the harsh environment of a ravaged Earth.



COMING  
SOON

Final Fantasy I (February 2008)... Final Fantasy II (February 2008)... Need for Speed ProStreet (February 2008)... The Fast and the Furious (March 2008)... Warriors of the Lost Empire (February 2008)... Flatout: Head On (February 2008)... Boulderdash Rocks (March 2008)... Iron Man (May 2008)... Hard Rock Casino (February 2008)



DS

iNCOMING

Coming to a dualscreen near you!



## Brain Assist

Publisher: Sega | Release date: Spring 2008

Given the high volume of software that boasts the ability to give your grey matter a workout, it's a wonder we're not all super-smart boffins with gigantic craniums. However, Sega obviously feels that there's room for one more and is preparing to release *Brain Assist*, which not only promises to grant intellectual exercise but also purports to be good fun at the same time.

## Ninja Reflex

Publisher: EA | Release date: March 2008

It's common knowledge that there are few things in this world cooler than being a ninja. Sadly not everyone has the opportunity to achieve this tantalising dream, but EA's recently announced *Ninja Reflex* is surely going to be the next best thing for prospective assassins. Built around several martial arts mini-games (think *Wario Ware*), this title aims to grant the player razor-sharp reflexes as well as being thoroughly entertaining to boot.



## Namco Museum

Publisher: Atari | Release date: February 2008

Namco is never reluctant to charge money for old rope, having released what seems like millions of retro compilations over the last few years. Guess what? There's another on the way and the usual suspects like *Pac-Man*, *Galaga*, *Galaxian* and *Xevious* are all included, with the rather less essential *Mappy*, *Tower of Duruga* and *Dig Dug 2* following up the rear. The biggest selling point is the inclusion of the Wi-Fi enabled multiplayer *Pac-Man VS*, though.



## Sonic Chronicles: The Dark Brotherhood

Publisher: Sega | Release date: Fall 2008 (US)

Bioware's latest RPG opus has been on the radar for a few months now but fresh information has recently surfaced, including a smattering of artwork and some gameplay details. The game promises to be a little less dark than Bioware's usual output and early impressions would suggest this is heading for the same market that Nintendo so successfully tapped into with *Mario and Luigi: Partners in Time*. Needless to say, this is one to watch.



## Draglade

Publisher: 505 Games | Release date: March 2008

Looking very much like some kind of weird fusion of *Yu-Gi-Oh* and *Elite Beat Agents*, *Draglade* is certainly one of the more original DS titles we'll be clapping eyes on in 2008. Facing off against various opponents, your aim is to string together rhythm-based attacks using special moves known as 'bullets'. You can also create custom combos to dish out even more punishment on your hapless foe. An RPG-style plot promises to underpin all of this innovative action.



## Zoo Tycoon 2

Publisher: THQ | Release date: February 2008

The original *Zoo Tycoon* was a massive success and it's unsurprising that a sequel is inbound. Taking the key ingredients that made the first game so appealing, *Zoo Tycoon 2* adds some neat extras – the most interesting being the Zookeeper mode, which uses the touchscreen for various tasks, such as treating animals. For those of you that like the idea of getting up close and personal with exotic beasts, this is surely a dream ticket.

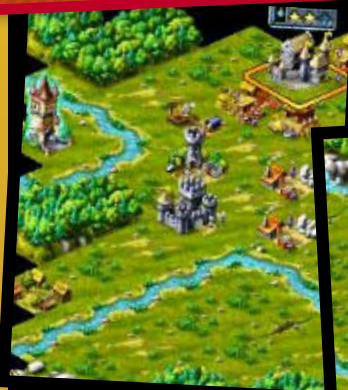


COMING  
SOON

Solitaire: Ultimate Collection (February 2008)... Cooking Mama 2: Dinner with Friends (February 2008)... Godzilla Unleashed (February 2008)... Bleach: Blade of Fate (February 2008)... Pro Evolution Soccer 2008 (March 2008)... Dragon Quest Monsters: Joker (March 2008)... Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fate (March 2008)... Sega Superstars Tennis (March 2008)



# MOBILE NEWS



## Townsman 5

Publisher: Disney Mobile Studios

As the number at the end of the title may suggest, the *Townsman* series has been going for some time now. Each version has steadily improved on the last and this fifth iteration promises to be the most accomplished yet – not just visually, but in terms of depth and challenge as well. Considering the solid gold reputation of the franchise, it would be naive to expect anything less than a classic, and with Disney's considerable marketing clout behind it, *Townsman 5* should definitely reach even more people this time around.



## Asterix: The Official Mobile Game of the Movie

Publisher: EA Mobile

Say what you will about European humour, but we're big fans of *Asterix* here at HGZine. The plucky Gaul is about to star in yet another amusing movie outing and EA Mobile has wasted no time in snapping up the mobile videogame rights. The game focuses on the Olympic Games, so expect some form of sporting action replete with a fair dose of Roman-bashing. It would also be fair to anticipate poor old Obelix being the brunt of some typically cutting gags as per usual.



## WALL•E

Publisher: THQ

**W**ALL•E: remember that name, because you're going to hear a lot of it in 2008. It's the monicker of Pixar's upcoming CGI epic and will no doubt rake in millions at the box office. THQ has stepped in to produce the official game of the film, which is expected to see the light of day when the film is released in July. *WALL•E* represents one of the more interesting concepts to come out of the talented movie studio, so hopefully the game will be worth investigating, too.



## Double Dragon II: The Revenge

Publisher: Elite

It may be older than the hills but *Double Dragon* is arguably one of the most influential fighting games of all time, providing the inspiration for genre classics such as *Final Fight* and *Streets of Rage*. This sequel improved on the original in many ways and it's nice to see it getting a new lease of life on mobile phones. Graphically it's looking incredibly faithful at this stage – time will tell if the classic, coin-munching gameplay is also retained, though.

## Mobile Battles: Reign of Swords

Publisher: Punch Entertainment

Taking more than a little inspiration from Nintendo's *Advanced Wars*, this turn-based strategy title is shaping up very nicely indeed. The visuals are colourful and attractive, with the developer borrowing copious amounts of visual touches from the aforementioned game. The inclusion of online play is undoubtedly the most interesting aspect of the package, however. We'll see how well it all gels together when the game is published in February.





**Publisher:** Ubisoft  
**Developer:** Gameloft  
**Heritage:** Splinter Cell  
 Chaos Theory  
**Link:** www.assassins  
 creedgame.com  
**ETA:** 29th February

## HANDS ON

# Assassin's Creed Altair's Chronicles

*Full of Eastern promise...*

**A**ltair is both an assassin and the star of one of the most visually stunning next generation games we've yet seen. This freshly announced DS prequel could well be the perfect accompaniment though, as what it obviously lacks in graphical shine is more than compensated by

sharp gameplay and a clever use of the DS's obvious natural abilities.

There's plenty of sneaking around (as you'd expect) in the game's four Middle Eastern cities but also plenty of combat, too. Altair will have 11 weapons to choose from, including five swords, daggers, explosives and a grappling hook. There are also plenty of unique moves, which are revealed as you work through the game.

## We've played it!

So, we've had the preview version of the game in our DS for some days now, and we're pleased to say that it's looking hugely impressive. The game starts with a sweeping panorama over some beautifully drawn 3D cityscapes and then you're into the game itself.

Graphically, *Altair's Chronicles* is almost perfect. The cities are well-defined and packed with detail. The top screen is used for the

main display, while the bottom one gives you a map and finer detail for the touchscreen mini-games (see 'The Killer Touch' boxout). As you progress, you learn new moves and power-up your weapons by collecting blue orbs dotted through the cities.

It's the general shine and polish that tells you *Altair's Chronicles* is going to be something special. The graphics are stunning without the expense of slowdown or clarity – you never lose your character in a wall of background pixels – and both the in-game soundtrack and spot effects are atmospheric and perfectly placed.

And, best of all, you're not going to have to wait too long to play it for yourself, as the game will hopefully be sneaking into a game store near you at the end of the month. ●

## THE KILLER TOUCH

*The mini-games explained...*

There are two mini-games that pop up at salient points in the gameplay. One allow you to pick pockets by guiding an object through a maze of others in the owner's bag – get it out of the bag in time and it's yours. The other has you tapping on pressure points on a human body to interrogate your victim. Hit the spots at exactly the right time and they'll tell you everything you need to know...



**"It's the shine and polish that tells you *Altair's Chronicles* is going to be something special"**

You'll need to look out for swinging ropes and falling platforms, too



Join the Templars? To dress myself in strange garb?

The cut-scenes are all done with the impressive in-game graphics engine

The map on the bottom screen shows you the movements of the guards

You spend a lot of time on the rooftops, as you can remain relatively unseen



DS

HGZine

ASSASSIN'S  
CREED

HOW COMPLETE?

95%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

95%

Say hello to the first big DS game of 2008



# Assassin's Creed

So how do you go about translating a mammoth next-generation epic to the DS? This – and many other questions – will now be answered by Julien Fournials, VP of Production at Gameloft, the game's developers

**W**hat's the biggest challenge facing a developer when it comes to bringing a cutting-edge next generation game like *Assassin's Creed* to a much smaller console like the DS?

Probably the biggest challenge was creating a believable, realistic 3D world on the DS – we wanted to make sure that the cities and dungeons we created felt like they could fit inside a world that would have been inhabited by Altair.

Developers tend to make 2D games on the Nintendo DS because they think that the console is not powerful enough to support an ambitious 3D game. We wanted to prove this wrong and show that this console could feature one of the most ambitious 3D games created for the portable consoles.

Mostly you head from left to right, but there are exceptions...

*Assassin's Creed* on Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 features some of the most detailed environments and the most realistic animations you can find on consoles, so our main challenge for *Altair's Chronicles* was to reflect this game's innovation and creativity on a more limited device.

To make life easier for you, Altair will automatically cling to the edge of a building when you jump towards it

**"The biggest challenge was creating a 3D world on the DS"**

The combat is sophisticated and extremely well done – even when the screen is full of enemies

Creating fluid and dynamic 3D movement for a character on the DS was definitely not an easy task. We had a top-notch animation team that really put their heart into capturing the grace and deadliness of a medieval assassin. And we also worked considerably on the backgrounds to keep the core artistic direction that got people excited about the next-gen version. We worked really hard to turn all these

objectives into successful achievements on the DS game.

**Does the storyline in *Altair's Chronicles* link in with the 360 and PS3 versions at all?**

*Assassin's Creed* on the DS is basically a prequel to the Xbox 360/PlayStation 3 game because we see Altair as a young assassin. The game will help people understand more about Altair himself, including who he



## > Interview continued

was before he undertook his quest for redemption and how he came to have descendants like Desmond.

### And with that in mind, have any locations from the original been reproduced for the DS game?

There are some cities that are in common with the next generation version – Jerusalem and Acre for instance – but also other cities that are exclusive to the DS version such as Alep and Tyre.

Each city features its own unique architectural style, which is something that we really wanted to keep for this DS version.

### How does the game use the DS's unique feature (touchscreen, microphone, etc)?

The Touchscreen is mainly used in the various mini-games. For example, in the pressure-point mini-game, you force a soldier to give you the information you need by playing a rhythm-based challenge game.

You also have to use the microphone in some spots, but we'll let you discover it for yourself...

### Is there any hope of a PSP version of Assassin's Creed?

A PSP version is not planned for the moment.

### What aspect (or aspects) of the game are you most proud of?

With *Altair's Chronicles* we proved conclusively that the Nintendo DS can also be considered a next-gen console. We recreated realistic and



**"Each city has its own unique architectural style"**



beautiful environments, true-to-life animations, and used the unique features of the DS console to make one of the most ambitious games on this platform.

We are also proud to show that *Assassin's Creed* has the capacity to excite all types of players, from hardcore gamers to casual players. With its beautiful environments, charismatic characters, and user-friendly but in-depth controls, all players will love this game.

### Is there anything you would like to have included but couldn't because of hardware limitations?

We wanted to include horseriding

sequences at first, but we put so many other things in the game that we had to leave them out. We also had to reduce the size of the cities compared to those in the next-gen version, but don't worry, as that pure, uninhibited freedom is still present in the game. ●

***Assassin's Creed Altair's Chronicles* will be released on 28th March, and, final code permitting, we're hoping to get a review of the game for you next month.**





# Asterix At The Olympic Games

*Getafix of old-school sporting events as Gauls and Romans take to track and field*

**Y**ou've got to hand it to the French. Only they could come up with a tall tale that rewrites history to recast Greece's Olympic Games as an ancient event conquered by the Gauls. A best-selling comic since the late 60s, *Asterix at the Olympic Games* is now also the third live-action outing

for the diminutive pigtailed hero and his monolithic best friend Obelix. And where there's a family-friendly movie there's inevitably a video game spin-off...

And yet, colour us excited about this pixelated interpretation. If there's one thing that works well on the dinky DS screen, it's cartoon capery. And if there's any

filmic subject matter that merits video game treatment then it's the Olympics. What's more, this is a game that cleverly provides not one, but two trips back in time. Obviously there's the version of life in Europe at turn of the first millennium. But then there's also the fact that *Asterix at the Olympics* offers a spiritual journey back to the 1980s, a time when *Track & Field*, Daley Thompson's *Decathlon* and other old-school multi-event sporting games ruled supreme.

## Gaul of duty

Javelin, hammer throwing, sprint, tug of war, and er, toadball – all the old favourites are here. Incredibly, some 100 events have been crammed in, with puzzles and a healthy dose of Roman soldier bashing all thrown into the mix. And just to keep things up-to-date, the age-old control method used for sporting games has been modified to make the most of the DS. Rather than alternately hammering two buttons like a mad loon with a severe

Players get to enter the arena as both Asterix and Obelix, with the option to switch characters at any point during the Olympic antics

**"Incredibly, some 100 events have been crammed in"**

case of the shakes, players instead waggle the stylus from side to side on the lower screen, with the resulting action unfolding on the display above.

And miraculously, the developers have somehow crammed an entire Olympic stadium onto the DS screen. Not literally obviously, but the way the camera snakes through the 3D environment and tracks the cartoon action undeniably makes this look very cool. Which, if we're being completely honest, isn't something that can be said for the movie itself. ●

The lower screen and stylus provide the key to building up speed and timing tricky movements during each event

Asterix goes 3D, with swooping camera moves that follow the action through over 100 different sporting mini-games

## ASTERIX AT THE MOVIES

*Big screen entertainment*

You may not find it sitting at the top of the UK box office any time soon, yet *Asterix at the Olympic Games* (the film) is the most expensive European movie ever made. Like the previous two films, it's a live-action affair. Atari has wisely chosen to model the game's visuals on the original comic-strip art by Albert Uderzo rather than the movie, though. A wise move, as they'd never have squeezed Gerard Depardieu's rendition of Obelix onto the DS display.



As ever, the intrepid Gauls must face off against Julius Caesar and his mighty minions

DS

HGZine



HOW COMPLETE?

95%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

85%

*Looks anything but Gaulling*





**Publisher:** Atari/Ignition  
**Developer:** InLight  
**Heritage:** Disney's Little Einsteins  
**Link:** www.teenagezombiesgame.com  
**ETA:** March

**PREVIEW FEEDBACK!**  
Click here to tell us what you think of *Teenage Zombies*

## BODY POPPING

*The grateful dead*

Look beyond all the campy sci-fi and the key *Teenage Zombies*' appeal is a control mechanism that allows switching between three very distinct zombie characters at any time. Only by learning to make the most of their individual abilities can players hope to make it through the game. First up there's Fins, whose tentacles allow for some pretty cool shimmying. Then there's Lefty, a female basketballer whose one good arm is handy for climbing. And finally there's Half-Pipe, a zombie with a skateboard where his lower torso should be.



# Teenage Zombies: Invasion of the Alien Brain Thingys!

*Dead teens breathe new life into the alien invasion B-movie concept*

This is one of those games that arrives armed with an arched eyebrow as well as a raygun. Ever since Tim Burton turned kitschy 50's sci-fi into comedy gold with *Mars Attacks!*, there's been a rash of sci-fi stories with a grimly fiendish, camp sense of fun cropping up in print, on the silver screen and in videogame form.

*Teenage Zombies: Invasion Of The Alien Brain Thingys!* has several things in

its favour however, not least the fact that by adding zombies to the mix, gamers effectively get parodies of two genres for the prices of one. There's also the fact that the DS isn't typically a stomping ground for either zombie or dayglo alien-based action. And finally, there's no denying that Inlight seem to have a real handle on how best to bring such ridiculous hijinks to life.

## Pass the cheese

This is a game that positively revels in the use of cheesy voiceovers, comic-strip panels and dialogue boxes, needlessly over the top expositions and outlandish scenarios. And for once, the obligatory peppering of stylus-based mini-games, puzzle quests and double screen battles feel wholly appropriate, rather than a desperate attempt to hide a lack of real content.

And let's face it, what other game offers the opportunity to return from beyond the grave and cast aside the usual instinct to go chomping on human cerebellum and instead do

battle with an alien called The Big Brain and his Brain Thingy Army?

The game is set for a launch this Easter. Cadbury's Cream Eggs are traditional, of course, but this year Atari clearly hopes we'll all be chowing down on something else with a crispy shell and gooey centre. Nice. ●

**"You have to do battle with an alien called The Big Brain and his Brain Thingy Army"**

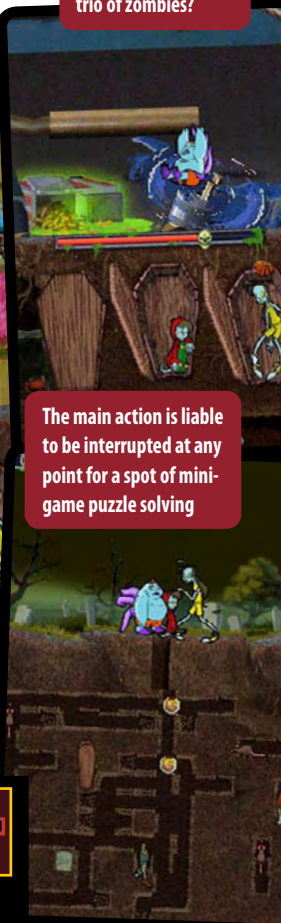


Interactive comic book presentation drives the madcap horror-meets-science fiction action

1950s-style alien invasions aren't what they used to be, thanks to a team of heroes – Fins, Lefty and Half-Pipe – with an insatiable taste for brains...



The main action is liable to be interrupted at any point for a spot of mini-game puzzle solving



The platform-based gameplay may look familiar enough, but when was the last time you completed levels using the unique abilities of a trio of zombies?

DS

HGZine



HOW COMPLETE?

100%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

85%

Original and fun – could be a hit



# Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII

Core blimey! Is this the best portable FF ever?

It can't be easy making a prequel to the most popular game in one of the most famous series of all time. The pressure's on, not only to create something that lives up to such an incredible heritage, but which can also bring in a host of new fans to the universe of *FFVII*. Amazingly, it's looking like Square-Enix has managed to create a game that somehow manages to do justice to its predecessor – and our hands-on time with the Japanese version reveals it to be a little different from the traditional RPG template.

Set seven years before the PlayStation classic, *Crisis Core* tells the story of Zack, a Second Class combat operative in an elite group named SOLDIER (they worked out the name before the convoluted acronym, clearly). After a number of fellow operatives under the command of a First Class officer go missing – along with the man himself – Zack is sent to investigate the situation, tagging along with a certain First Class soldier named – yep – Sephiroth.

The history of such an iconic character is bound to excite those who battled through the original, and indeed this is one of the driving forces behind the story. But this is no turn-based, menu-driven role-player, as Square has given *FFVII* a modern spin with an intriguing combat system. Though initially it seems a little simplistic – not to mention awkward – Zack's attacks are less immediate than a traditional third-person fighter, yet the game appears to reward button-mashing – soon you'll be taking on

**"This is no turn-based role-player, as Square have given it a modern spin"**

enemies who require a lot more thought. Pressing the shoulder buttons cycles between spells, and there's the innovative Digital Mind Wave system that continuously spins three fruit machine-style reels – which you have to match up for special Limit Break attacks. This adds a great deal of variety to what could easily have turned into endless monotonous brawling. It's sure to bring a massive grin to your face when Zack calls in a helicopter to take out a group of baddies.

## Familiar ground

While all this might come as a shock to *FF* veterans, there's plenty of familiar stuff for hardened RPG-ers to sink their teeth into. Fans of the original will be pleased to know that Materia is an important factor in the gameplay. For the uninitiated, these are elements

Zack and – always nice to see a familiar face – Cloud compete for the game's Spikiest Hair award

You'll meet plenty of beasties who dwarf Zack. In these situations a more tactical approach is preferable, with magic attacks a key part of your armoury

There's a startling variety of enemies, and they're all beautifully drawn and animated. This is one expensive-looking game

As you start the game, Sephiroth is your commanding officer – the game's plot details his path to the dark side...



which come in different colours, each with their own effect on your character – purple for stat upgrades, green for magic. Summons make a return too, except this time they form part of the DMW – each new one is accompanied by a dazzling cut-scene when you line the reels up successfully.

It's been out in Japan since last September – released alongside a

The game's story leads directly into *Final Fantasy VII* – there's no cliffhanger ending here (unless you've never played the original)

**"You've probably never seen anything quite so impressive on PSP"**

limited-edition PSP that sadly we're unlikely to see on these shores. The reason for the delay is that Square has invested serious time in getting the translation just right for its growing Western audience. From what we've seen so far, the localisation team has done a very good job, though most of the time you'll be too busy gawping in amazement at the absolutely stunning cut-scenes to worry about the dialogue. We're not exaggerating when we say you've probably never seen anything quite so impressive on PSP, with action sequences so cinematic they should be in your local fleapit rather than on a handheld.

Mark our words: the wait will be worth it. And with an astounding three hundred side missions, and a Hard mode exclusive to Western gamers, we've got just three words for you: Do. Not. Miss. ●

## RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

The vital ingredients to a tasty *Final Fantasy* spin-off



**CGI Overload**

**Jackpot!**

**Story time**

## CGI Overload

How they do it we'll never know. The Square-Enix team has some of the most talented 3D artists in the business and the cut-scenes are their time to shine – or rather to show off. Blistering action sequences and epic cinematography are the order of the day here. Some scenes will genuinely make your jaw drop. Awesome stuff.



HP	577 / 677
MP	93 / 93
AP	112 / 112



The music – by *Vagrant Story* composer Takeharu Ishimoto – lends a wonderful sense of urgency and tension to the battles



Aerith is another famous character from *VII* making a very welcome reappearance here. *Crisis Core* has plenty of moments which are pure fan service



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# Mario and Sonic at the Olympic Games

*Ready, steady, scrub!*

**F**irst things first: if you're considering buying this game, then you need to head down to your local game store and invest in a screen protector pronto. *Mario and Sonic* requires such repeated abuse of the touchscreen that without any form of shield, you're going to knacker your

DS in record time. We're not kidding – particularly in multiplayer when things get competitive, you'll be amazed how much pressure you're putting on. You'll thank us in the long run. Honest.

Vigorous scrubbing aside, *Mario and Sonic* is perfect handheld fodder. It's unfortunate it couldn't have been released alongside the Wii game, as anyone who's played that will feel a pang of overfamiliarity – and the physical nature of the DS's motion controls seems more appropriate for sporting events. Still, the stylus is an effective substitute, with some occasionally inspired use of the touchscreen interface. Though running is a

simple case of sliding rapidly from side to side, copying different movements for trampoline tricks is a neat idea, while events like the javelin and long jump require well-timed, precision lines to get the best results. It might be a little easy to achieve a world record, but that just shows how simple and effective the controls are – and then you've got online leaderboards to compete with once you've beaten the computer opposition.

## Group events

Characters are split into specialised categories, so Sonic's a speed merchant while Mario is a good all-rounder, and their strengths really can make the difference – for example, highly skilled characters benefit from a larger target in the archery game.

With a fairly generous single-cart multiplayer alongside a more fully-featured wireless option for friends who also own a copy, it's as a competitive pursuit that this really shines. And with plenty of unlockables for the solo player, there's enough here to keep every DS owner happy. Result! ●

Chris Schilling

Publisher: Sega  
Developer: Sega  
Heritage: Sonic series,  
Virtua Tennis, Sega Rally  
Link: [www.sega.com/  
gamesite/marioandsonic/  
index.php](http://www.sega.com/gamesite/marioandsonic/index.php)  
**OUT NOW**

Trampolining requires increasingly complex manoeuvres as you progress – you might need to tap and flick six or seven times before you land

The greater precision of the stylus gives it the edge over the Wii game in certain events – particularly if you're trying to break a record

**"Highly skilled characters benefit from a larger target in the archery game"**



Knuckles and Wario are both Power players, giving their table tennis smashes a bit more meat



Cycling requires you to pace yourself – and it's wise to stay in an opponent's slipstream to conserve stamina

## THREE CHEERS

*Going for gold*

It always makes us happy to see developers come up with innovative ideas that make good use of the DS's features. Clapping to raise cheers from the crowd whose encouragement gives you a boost in the long jump is a genius idea. Meanwhile, skeet shooting requires a shout to set the clay targets in motion.



**HGZine Verdict**

**Just shy of gold status – an impressive silver medal performance**

DS

- 👍 Terrific 3D graphics
- 👍 Online stats add replay value
- 👎 A few weak events

8





**Publisher:** Nintendo  
**Developer:** Intelligent Systems  
**Heritage:** Fire Emblem, Paper Mario, Wario Ware Touched!  
**Link:** <http://advancewars.com>  
**OUT NOW**



## FLARE PLAYER

All will be revealed...

One of the most useful additions is the new Flare unit, which fires a light which reveals a thirteen square area in Fog of War. It's not much cop against most units (infantry aside) but this is absolutely invaluable in unveiling hidden enemies and scuppering their plans. It's further proof that Nintendo has worked hard on perfecting the strategy rather than throwing out a limp sequel.



# Advance Wars: Dark Conflict

Nintendo's amazing strategy series goes all emo on us...

Evidently My Chemical Romance have been on heavy rotation on the Nintendo office radio of late. *Dark Conflict* – as its name suggests – is about as bleak as it gets for a first-party game. It's coloured in the greys and browns of a post-apocalyptic landscape where 90 per cent of Earth's population are dead. Cheerful stuff, eh? It gets worse, as the remaining survivors are dying from starvation and parasitic diseases, while also under attack from insane megalomaniacs hell-bent on wiping out the last 10 per cent.

Yet if at first the pitch-black plot and doom-laden dialogue feel a little depressing, that old *Advance Wars*

magic soon starts to worm its way under your skin. It's a far cry from the kitchen-sink approach of *Advance Wars: Dual Strike*, where the rock-solid ruleset was tweaked once too often. *Dark Conflict* is essentially a series reboot; a stripped-down, leaner, meaner *Advance Wars*, where each skirmish is not just a Tonka Toy war, but a genuine fight for survival. As the story deepens, you'll grow attached to units and characters, and the well-rationed CO powers are rare welcome boosts to your depleted frontline.

## Command and conquer

You can ally your Commanding Officer to a particular unit – with enhanced stats for all those within a certain radius – which adds an extra layer of strategy, while the new WarTank and Bike units are welcome additions to the formula. Sea battles are more important than ever before, with Battleships now able to move and fire on a single turn, and the new Duster air units are hugely effective for scouting runs.

The loss of the War Room is a pain, though the unlockable Trial Maps are a fine replacement. Throw in the ability to finally battle your mates online, and you've got the best in the series since the GBA original. High praise indeed. ●

Chris Schilling

The new battle animations look a little rough, but everything moves that little bit quicker for a faster-paced experience

The characters are deep and believable, meaning that you'll soon grow attached to them



"This is the best in the series since the GBA original"

Units can now level up depending on how long you keep them for. An extra stats boost can make the difference between damaging an enemy and destroying it

**HGZine Verdict** Deep, dark and devilishly difficult – *Advance Wars* is back in style

DS

- More balanced than ever
- Online battles at last!
- Some rough presentation

9

At first we missed the primary colours of old, but the grim storyline is gripping stuff



PSP

# The Fast and the Furious

"It's the car modification that gives the game its charm"

Catch the drift as you speed along the highways of Tokyo

While most other racers chug along at a Sunday driving pace, *The Fast and the Furious* bombs along and has a feeling of speed that is only rivalled by the *Burnout* series. But although it's packed with slick touches, it doesn't quite knock the likes of *The Need for Speed* and *Ridge Racer* off the PSP podium. The game is based on the third film in the series – *Tokyo Drift* – and as a result you have to cruise along the city's Wangan Highway looking for rivals to race against to win cash. There are loads of different exits along the highway, some of which are garages where you can buy one of the 100 or so licensed cars or bling up your motor, while others offer race challenges against other cars to prove you're the



This game does a great job of capturing the mood and feeling of the films



Other drivers will get cocky, and the only way to stick it to them is to thrash them in a race



With more than 300 different body kits, it's not too hard to make your car look your own



Once you get your hands on a decent car, the feeling of speed is truly superb

best cruiser in the city. The races are one-on-one affairs, and while this can get a repetitive at times, there are plenty of varied challenges to keep you entertained. The more races you win, the more cash you'll get to tune up your car, and there are stacks of different parts to turn your ride from an average motor into a mean street racing machine. Not only that but you can also bling up your wheels with extras like paint jobs, spoilers and neon lights, so it looks as good as it performs. It's this car modification that gives *The Fast and the Furious* its charm – you'll get a kick from winning races and bagging cash to buy cars and upgrade them, and watching the car you built turn from a banger into a blinger is a satisfying feeling.

At first the racing is tricky to master – invariably your car's not up to much and the handling's tricky, but once you start winning races and improving your car, the game becomes both rewarding and addictive. Although it's not slick enough to lead the PSP racing pack, *The Fast and the Furious* is enjoyable enough to be worth taking for a spin. ●

Dave Perrett

**HGZine Verdict** Speedy and slick street racing, though it can get a bit repetitive

- 👍 Rockin' soundtrack
- 👍 Slick drifting
- 👎 No crashes

7



**Publisher:** Namco Bandai  
**Developer:** Eutechnyx  
**Heritage:** Ridge Racer 2 (Namco Bandai), Pimp My Ride (Eutechnyx)  
**Link:** www.namco.bandagames.com/games/fastfurious  
**ETA:** 7th March



PSP

# Harvey Birdman: Attorney at Law

Publisher: Capcom

Developer: High Voltage Software

Heritage: Leisure Suit Larry: Magna Cum Laude, Family Guy

Link: www.harveybirdmanthe

game.com

ETA: March

Capcom enter the courtroom once more

Any PSP owners hoping for a serious rival to the DS's *Ace Attorney* series should cancel those thoughts now. *Harvey Birdman: Attorney at Law* isn't so much a game as an interactive cartoon, with as much time spent watching than playing. It's the sort of title where you answer a multiple-choice question just to be presented with a silly, brief snippet of story. But as long as you're happy to accept *Harvey Birdman* as little more than a series of extended episodes, punctuated by moments of player interaction, then you'll have a great time.

Gigi, Harvey's philandering wife, is something of a hindrance – it doesn't help that she can't remember our hero's name, either

This is thanks to the series' trademark humour, which – while it might polarise tastes – we happen to find highly amusing. Certainly, if you're familiar with the Adult Swim cartoon on which the game is based, you'll know to expect one-liners zinged back and forth like a game of verbal tennis, while there's plenty of surreal comedy moments. Its five cases are generally easy to figure out, with just the occasional head-scratcher that's mostly just thrown in for daftness' sake.

## Fast romp

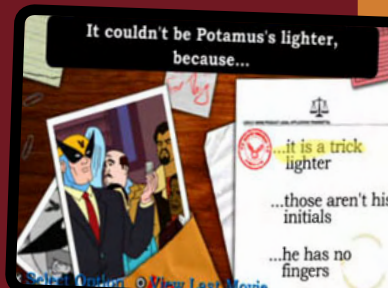
It's a fast-paced romp, which sees the titular superhero playing detective as well as lawyer by investigating the crime scene before entering the courtroom. All this will sound familiar to DS owners, but there's not the same level of depth as in Capcom's other lawyer sim – however, all the dialogue is fully voice-acted, with many of the cartoon's cast contributing.

Each case is packed with likeably silly moments – certain incorrect dialogue choices unlock secret clips from the

## CASE DISMISSED

*Flying high with the legal eagles*

The opening level is over and done with very quickly indeed, though it's merely an appetiser for the more substantial cases to follow, with no investigatory stages. The game's surreal humour is exemplified by your opening defence – your client couldn't have lit a match to start a fire because he has no fingers...



**"It's low on interactivity and depth, but high on entertainment value"**

show, like a collection featuring Harvey's enthusiastic "I'll take the case!" catchphrase. You'll breeze through them all fairly quickly though, and there's little to bring you back once the credits have rolled. It's a slight experience, low on interactivity and depth, but high on entertainment value. If that sounds like your cup of tea, then *Harvey Birdman's* insane antics make for a worthwhile buy. ●

Chris Schilling

HGZine  
Verdict

No objections from us, but this is one case that's over too soon

PSP



Very funny in places



Some nice twists



There's not enough of it

7



PSP

# Final Fantasy

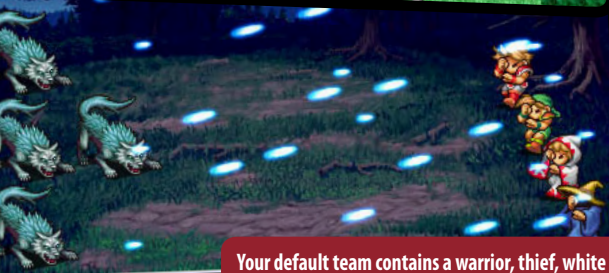
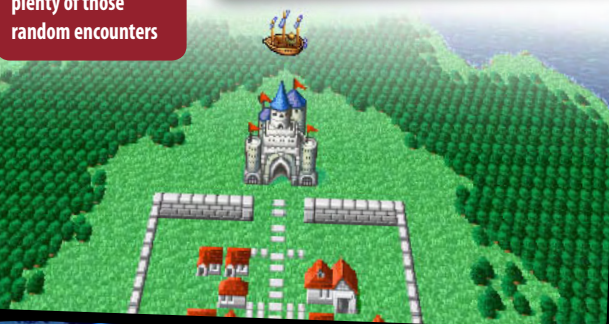
*A legend begins...*

**H**ere's a fact that might shock some people: this is called *Final Fantasy: Anniversary Edition* in the US and Japan. So why do we get the simpler name? Because neither the original NES *Final Fantasy* nor the PlayStation remake ever made it to UK shores. It's amazing to think that one of gaming's best-known names wasn't

deemed worthy of a European release for half of its twenty-year history, but it's true. The only time we've seen this game before was as part of the *Dawn of Souls* Gameboy Advance double-pack a little over three years ago. As such, this represents not only a remake of the game that kicked off one of gaming's most enduring series but an invaluable history lesson, too.

**"Its lack of handholding makes it an experience for true gaming experts"**

You'll spend plenty of time queuing in your airship, though be prepared for plenty of those random encounters



Your default team contains a warrior, thief, white mage and black mage – though you can change character types and names at the outset

## You're history

But we don't buy games purely for rose-tinted nostalgia, do we? Which is unfortunate in the case of *Final Fantasy*, as its mechanics are rooted in a bygone age where games made demands of players most modern gamers would find unfair. Thankfully, its graphical makeover – including some wonderfully remade cut-scenes – makes it worth ploughing through, even after the umpteenth random battle in a row.

Yep, the staple of many a Japanese RPG is in full effect here, with your team of four characters barely able to walk a few steps without bumping into a goblin or three. It's your typical turn-based combat that you'll already know whether you love and loathe.

*Final Fantasy's* hardcore nature is likely to split its potential audience right down the middle. This game comes from the days when luxuries like in-game journals



Battles aren't particularly dynamic, but there's some impressive 2D art – the bosses look especially good

## WHAT'S THE STORY?

*Back to where it all began...*

It's clear that the *Final Fantasy* of today is a far cry from how the series started. These days, the games have labyrinthine plotting and characters with complex emotions and dubious motives. Here, it's simply a team on a quest to fulfil an ancient prophecy and save the world. The dialogue has been tweaked to add humour, but it's about as simple as game stories get.



Unne: Just a moment. Let me see that tablet...

didn't exist, so prepare to settle down with a pad and pen to piece together the plot and figure out where on earth you're meant to be going next.

Its refreshing lack of handholding makes it an experience for true gaming experts, so if you're up to the challenge then a crisp £20 note will net you a piece of gaming history.

Chris Schilling

HGZine  
Verdict

**It's time to grind your way through the original dungeon master**

PSP

- ✓ Crisp new visuals
- ✓ Decidedly old-school in feel...
- ✗ ...but that's not always good

7



PSP

# Final Fantasy II

*Come back to what you know*

A case of 'second verse, same as the first'? Not really. *Final Fantasy II* represents a departure from the original in several areas, but overall it's not as enjoyable an experience. It's arguably the least significant entry in the series in many ways, and while it works reasonably well as a companion piece to the PSP remake of the original, if you only pick up one of the two, this is the one we'd advise you to avoid.

The main problem with the game is the new levelling-up system, which gets rid of the simple character types and replaces it with a more flexible

approach to managing your party – allowing you to customise their skillset in a greater level of detail. While this sounds like a worthwhile addition (and similar mechanics have worked well in RPGs since), it just becomes confusing, particularly as the best way to gain HP is by getting hit. The random nature of enemy attacks means that your party members can often be completely unbalanced. You'll often need to wander off the beaten track to locate foes in an attempt to re-align your stats.

## Visual inspiration

It seems a notch harder than *Final Fantasy*, and while its locations are a little more visually inspired, it's a shame Square-Enix didn't attempt to compensate for the original game's issues. It's a faithful conversion, but in this case a little less reverence would have worked wonders.

**"Final Fantasy II represents a departure from the original in several areas"**

Monster design is reliably solid, with some exceptional models for the boss creatures. Nice cut-scenes, too

Defeated 1  
Rank 6  
HP 2000  
MP 0  
Attack 3  
Accuracy 1  
Defense 4  
Evasion 1  
Magic Defense 4  
Gil 0  
Treasure 0

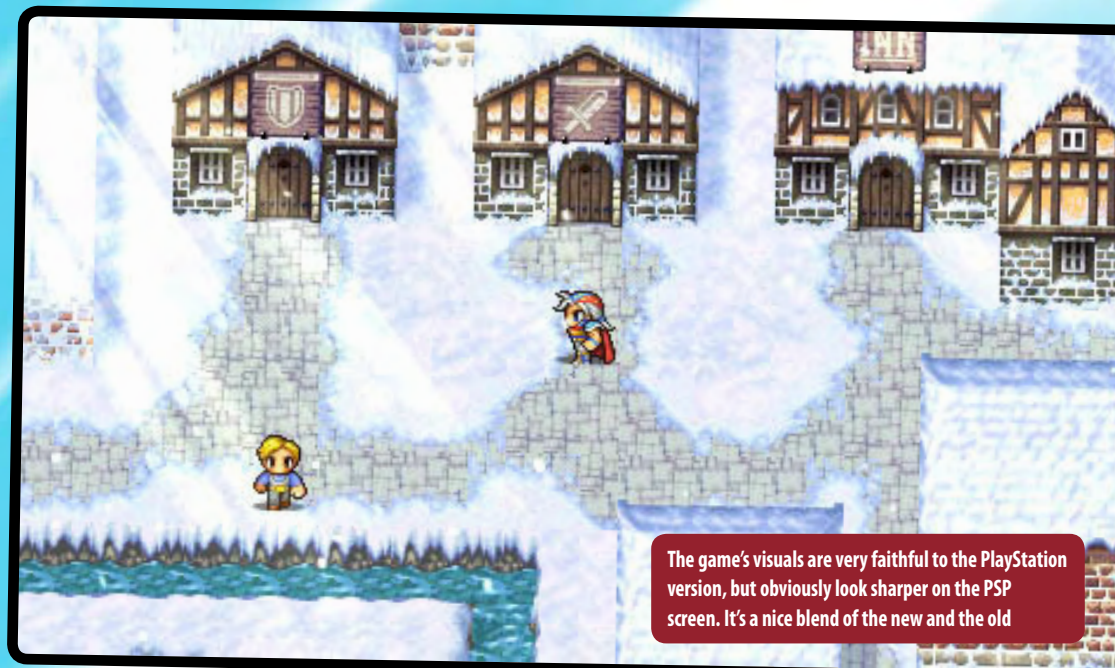
Battles are essentially very similar to those in the first game. Unfortunately, the unpredictable results can fatally unbalance your team, though

Firion	1781/	1805	118
Maria	1292/	1316	141
Gay	1795/	1819	233
Minwu	815/	1327	103

## IT'S GOOD TO TALK

*How to make friends in FFII*

One of *FFII*'s most notable ideas comes through talking to the various computer-controlled characters. As you progress, you'll notice certain key words or phrases cropping up in conversation. Repeating these words back to other characters then allows the plot to progress. It may all seem unsophisticated by today's standards, but back in the day this would have been fairly unique.



The game's visuals are very faithful to the PlayStation version, but obviously look sharper on the PSP screen. It's a nice blend of the new and the old

It's not all bad, though. The story and dialogue are superior to the original, and it's still a fascinating lesson in how the genre evolved. And its one additional dungeon, the tricky Arcane Academy, is a nice extra. But with too many annoyances added to its already fairly niche appeal, it's not a game we can wholeheartedly recommend. ●

Chris Schilling

HGZine  
Verdict

**Two steps forward, but three back – buy the original instead**

PSP

- 👍 Tough-as-old-boots battling
- 👎 Wonky stat upgrading
- 👎 Not as good as the original

6



# REVIEW ROUND-UP

DS

## Cooking Mama 2

Publisher: 505 Games | Release date: 15th February

It's easy to dismiss *Cooking Mama* as a game for young girls, but that would be to ignore its many qualities – its terrific use of the DS's capabilities for one, its unshakeable charm for another, and its undeniably accessible approach. It all makes for a game that anyone – of any skill level – can pick up and play.

Thankfully the sequel improves on the original in many ways. There are more Western recipes for those who wondered about some of the strange concoctions in the first game, while the niggles – like the near-impossible peeling – have been all but eradicated.

And with a greater variety of tasks to perform, all with simple and effective stylus movements, it's surprisingly enjoyable to produce that perfect meal for your pals. Perhaps you should buy it for your sister, then play it in secret.



- More variety than the first game
- Charming and amusing throughout
- Still a little slight for long-term thrills

A tasty treat for younger gamers

7

## Bleach: The Blade Of Fate

Publisher: Sega | Release date: 29th February

Have expert developers Treasure ever made a bad game? Well, they've certainly not here, with a 2D scrapper that's the best of its kind on DS.

*Bleach* is based on the popular Japanese manga, and while its story will baffle those unfamiliar with the series, the action is accessible enough for anyone to enjoy. Large, well-animated characters battle it out on the top screen, while special attacks and power-ups are handled by pressing cards on the touchscreen with your thumb. It works surprisingly well, and with a large list of characters, modes and options, there's enough to keep fighting fans busy for a good few months at least. Online brawls sweeten the deal, making this one of the best value for money packages on the console.



- Terrific presentation
- Perfectly balanced brawling
- Too hardcore for some?

A beat-'em-up to Treasure

8

## Dragon Quest Monsters: Joker

Publisher: Square-Enix | Release date: 14th March

'*Pokémon* for older kids' is the basic idea behind *Joker*, the first in a long-running Japanese RPG series to make the UK, following the success of the PS2's *Dragon Quest VIII*. It certainly looks a lot sharper than Nintendo's monster-battler, with cel-shaded 3D visuals which bear an uncanny resemblance to the aforementioned PlayStation hit. It's a little too wordy in places, while its Wi-Fi online scraps are unfriendly.

Its most glaring weakness is a lack of longevity – it doesn't take long to finish, and there's never quite the same compulsion to 'catch 'em all' as in *Pokémon*. Pity, as here is a polished take on the genre that doesn't quite have the charm of Nintendo's critters, but more than makes up for it in the combat.



- Stunning visuals
- Inspired battling
- Too many tiny niggles

*Pokémon* Senior? Well, almost

7



## Recommended DS Releases

Recent unmissable goodies

### Mystery Detective 2 (505 Games)

Madder than a box of frogs, an amusing adventure that's terrifically warped, old-school fun.

### Geometry Wars: Galaxies (Sierra)

Addictive like a box of Celebrations, this shooter has brilliant controls and a fantastic multiplayer mode.

### Mario Party DS (Nintendo)

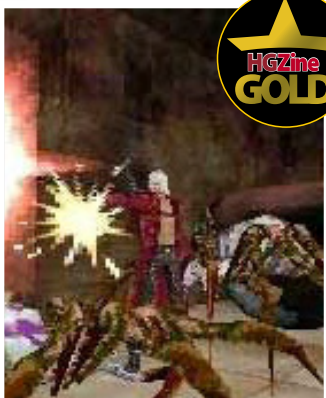
Top-notch multiplayer entertainment, with plenty of mini-game mayhem. Best *Mario Party* in years.





# MOBILE REVIEWS

All the latest from the world of mobile phone gaming



## Devil May Cry: Dante's Awakening

**Publisher:** Capcom  
This mobile action title is so good it makes you forget you're playing it on your humble phone. The 3D visuals are sumptuous, and the action is fast-paced and varied, thanks to a surprisingly diverse control system that works with the limitations of the phone's keypad rather than against it.

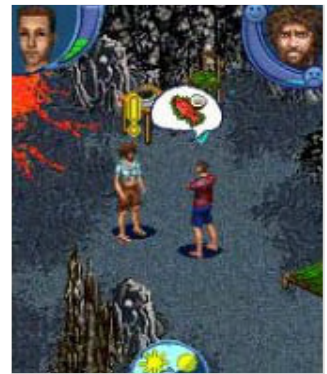
- ✓ Wonderful visuals
- ✓ Killer gameplay
- ✓ Loads of replayability

There's no tears here

9

## The Sims 2 Castaway

**Publisher:** EA Mobile  
Whatever your viewpoint on the *Sims* franchise, it's hard to deny the sheer amount of effort that has gone into this iteration. Practically all the content from the console version is intact and although the visuals have taken a step back, everything looks perfectly acceptable. Think *Lost* but with less peril and more materialistic castaways and you're pretty close.



- ✓ Detailed graphics
- ✓ Plenty to see and do
- ✗ Hate *The Sims*? You'll hate this

Another fine Sims game

7



## Destroy all Humans! Crypto Does Vegas

**Publisher:** THQ Wireless  
Anti-hero Crypto the alien is back in his third mobile phone outing and this time he's decided to descend on the hive of scum and villainy that is Las Vegas. The developer has clearly taken the criticisms levelled at the previous titles to heart, but although the game looks wonderful, the rather simplistic gameplay is something of a step backwards. You can only control the direction in which Crypto shoots and the game quickly falls into bland repetitiveness as a result.

- ✓ Fantastic presentation
- ✗ Limited gameplay
- ✗ Controls are too restrictive

Viva Las Vegas? Not quite

5

## Gothic 3: The Beginning

**Publisher:** HandyGames  
Your mobile phone may not seem like the ideal platform for an immersive and engaging role-playing epic, but *Gothic 3* proves otherwise. This is a sprawling fantasy yarn with plenty of orcs and elves to do battle with. There are also plenty of silly names like 'Kohrinis' and 'Xardas'. It's all pretty uniform stuff for RPG fans, but considering this is a mobile phone release, you can't help but be impressed by the amount of playtime that is packed into *Gothic 3*. If you're a fan of the genre then this will come in handy the next time you're stuck on the bus.



- ✓ Astonishing depth
- ✓ Decent storyline
- ✗ Not exactly action-packed

A great RPG for your phone

7



**RECOMMENDED**  
Four mobile games you must own

*God of War: Betrayal*  
(Sony Online Entertainment)  
Mobile phone gaming that's fit for Gods

*Good Night Mr Snoozleberg*  
(IG Fun)  
Impressive sleepwalking puzzle fun

*Hot Balloon Race*  
(Digital Chocolate)  
Top helium-powered racing action

*Snoop Dog Cruisin' Los Angeles*  
(Sony Online Entertainment)  
Daft concept but surprisingly entertaining



## Mr Driller Deluxe

**Publisher:** Namco Bandai  
Poor old *Mr Driller*. He's never really found the audience he deserves, despite possessing some frighteningly addictive gameplay. The hope is that this latest mobile edition will go some way to changing that, because it effortlessly manages to convey the brilliance of the home console originals in your phone. The idea is to simply drill downwards while collecting oxygen capsules and avoiding falling blocks. It sounds straightforward enough in theory but is devilishly hard in practice. In short, this is nearly perfect mobile entertainment.

- ✓ Faithful to the original games
- ✓ Likeable visuals
- ✗ Possibly too limited for some

Dig deep for puzzle fun

8



# > Inbox

Your questions answered and your fears put to rest, courtesy of HGZine!

**READER  
FEEDBACK!**  
Click here to  
send us a  
letter now!

I HAVE HAD MY PSP for a couple of years now and I really enjoys playing it, but I'm getting less and less play out of it as the battery doesn't last as long as it once did – I used to get about four hours charge from it and now I get around one. Can I replace the battery or do I have to buy a new PSP?

**Adam Green, London**

>> You can indeed buy a new battery for your PSP Adam, and the good news is that it probably won't cost you as much as you'd think it will. There's more good news though, as you'll probably find that the battery you buy will offer him

significantly more playing time than the original one did when it was new.

There are plenty of websites selling new PSP batteries, but we recommend that you start with [www.pspworld.co.uk](http://www.pspworld.co.uk).

MY SON WANTS TO PLAY an 18-certificate game on his PSP, but he's only 14. Some of his mates play them and I'm not sure whether there's any harm in them or whether I should just stick to my guns and get him something more suitable for his age group. What's your advice on this?

**Sally Hancock, Belfast**

>> Ratings on games should be treated like any other (films, etc.). We're sure that you wouldn't be happy for your son to watch an 18-certificate film, and the same rule applies to games.

Adult games feature mature content that isn't suitable for anyone under the recommended age. Thankfully there are plenty of excellent games for PSP, so finding something more appropriate for your son's age shouldn't be difficult.

JUST A QUICK ONE to say that although I'm a new reader of HGZine, I just want to congratulate you all for producing the most original computer magazine I think I've ever seen. And if you've got some free games lying around then you can always send them to me!

**Liam French, Thornbury**

>> Glad you like the mag, Liam. It would appear that many thousands of happy readers agree with you.



And sorry, but no amount of flattery will allow you access to our bloated high security games storage facility.

I WAS LOOKING ONLINE at Sony's release schedule for the PSP this year and there's hardly anything on it. What chance does the PSP have if even Sony aren't releasing games for it?

**Carl Parry, Sheffield**

>> Don't worry Carl, as Sony will be releasing plenty of PSP games this year, they just haven't announced them yet. Watch this space...

Violent games are rated highly for a reason, so make sure that you only buy games that are suitable for your age

Sony will be releasing plenty of PSP games this year, including *God of War: Chains of Olympus*



## GAME MATTERS

*This month everyone wants to talk about GTA...*

I'VE PLAYED BOTH GTA GAMES on the PSP and now I want to play *San Andreas Stories*. Can you tell me when is it coming out?

**James Slater, Dudley**

>> Bad news James, as it doesn't look like *San Andreas* will be making it to the PSP. The problem is that the game engine is significantly more advanced than the previous two games and it just wouldn't be possible to port it to PSP. Sorry.

*GRAND THEFT AUTO IV* is looking like being the best one yet. Any chance of a PSP version?

**Tim Williams, Bournemouth**

>> Absolutely not. If Rockstar can't do *San Andreas Stories* (See above), then there's no way they'll be able to do *GTA IV*.

I'VE RECENTLY PLAYED one of the really old 2D *Grand Theft Auto* games (on PSone) and I was thinking that they'd work really well on the DS. What do you think?

**Chrissy Boy, Manchester**

>> We think you're completely right about that, but sadly Rockstar have no plans to release any more *GTA* games on the handheld consoles.

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miss  
Issue 14

Out  
March 13

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now!



# A MOVIE SPECTACULAR!

In HGZine Issue 14

Grab the popcorn and make yourself comfortable, as we take a closer look at some of the blockbusters heading your way, including



## PREVIEWS

**High School Musical:  
Work This Out  
Ferrari Challenge  
Ninja Reflex**

## REVIEWS

**Assassin's Creed  
Altair's Chronicles  
FlatOut: Head On  
Need for Speed ProStreet**

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